

COASTAL CONNECTIONS



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A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION FOCUSED ON TOOLS FOR COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGERS

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COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROFILE



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Hometown: Baltimore, Maryland

Education: B.S., Loyola College in Maryland; M.S., Morgan State University; Ph.D., University of Delaware; postdoctoral studies, University of California, Berkeley

Most fulfilling aspect of your job: Working with a top-notch staff and faculty to improve community understanding and stewardship of coastal and marine resources.

Most challenging aspect of your job: Maintaining and building excellence on a core budget that hasn't changed appreciably in over 20 years.

One work-related accomplishment you're proud of: Cofounding the Center for Smart Building and Community Design.

One personal accomplishment you're proud of: Mentoring over 75 students in my laboratory;

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THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS

SMART COASTAL GROWTH

Most coastal resource managers would agree that sustainable coastal growth, or smart growth, is necessary for protecting the environment and for building economically and socially healthy communities. But putting smart growth theories into practice often proves difficult. Here is some help for facing some of the more common obstacles to smart growth projects.

Stakeholder Buy-In

Smart growth projects primarily involve developers, real estate agents, lenders, local governments, and diverse local community representatives. With this many people involved, getting everyone to agree on anything is tough. The first step is to devise a clear vision for development at a watershed level so the community can identify areas for development and areas for protection.

In Wisconsin, the state incorporated guidelines for such planning into its legislation. The goals of these guidelines, according to Brian Ohm, a land use planning professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, are to "centralize the various local government requirements for planning and to encourage better coordination at various levels of government."

Towns and cities are encouraged to create comprehensive plans and policies that provide a path for development balanced with conservation. Other ways to get stakeholders committed to a smart growth project include

- Creating a business plan for the project, rather than a real estate plan, which usually focuses on market research and site drawings. A strong business plan demonstrates the real estate value of the project and the revenue and rewards it will provide over time.
- Making the risks and the benefits clear from the start. Stakeholders will be less leery of a project when both the pros and cons are defined.
- Making the permitting process as clear and easy as possible. Lenders and developers will be more likely to continue working on such projects if local government allows work to move forward smoothly.
- Using other stakeholders' commitment as proof. In Wisconsin, for example, the coastal management program had already identified that land use planning was becoming an important issue. Its attention to the issue bolstered further smart growth efforts in the legislature.

Regulation Reform

Many state and local regulations are based on older, more suburban development standards. These ordinances will need to be updated to allow for smart growth practices. To get them updated, present your recommended changes to state or local legislators, along with strong proof that the community supports them and the project. "If you present [your plan] to legislators and convince them that there's a wide consensus on it, they'll most likely support it," Ohm explains. But changing the rules is not easy.

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being awarded the University of Hawai'i Regents' Medal for Excellence in Research.

Things you do in your

spare time: Hike, read, enjoy music, and tend roses.

Family: Wife, Susan, and daughter, Emilie

Favorite movie: *Master and Commander*

In your CD player right

now: Carly Simon, *Reflections*

Although a mainland native, Gordon Grau is now a Hawaiian, with over 20 years on the islands. Much of his assimilation to Hawaiian culture comes from the work he and his staff do to foster the traditional *ahupua`a* system of coastal management practiced on the islands for hundreds of years. In this system, people in each division of land and water, or *ahupua`a*, integrated management of their cultural, economic, and environmental resources. "What makes *ahupua`a* remarkable," Gordon notes, "is that everything the Hawaiians did worked within the ecosystem."

This idea of integrating all elements of a community inspired Gordon and others to open the Center for Smart Building and Community Design, a partnership of federal and local agencies that engages communities in making their areas more sustainable, economically vital, and environmentally sound. In less than a year, this center has begun a number of projects to help Hawaiians embrace smart growth practices to protect and enhance their communities.

Another type of growth Gordon enjoys is that of roses—he has several plants. "They thrive in Hawai'i," he explains. Gordon lives in Kaneohe with his wife, daughter, and roses.

Keep in mind that this stage of the process

- Takes time. There will be several rounds of discussion, review, voting, etc. before any laws are changed.
- Takes compromise. It's almost guaranteed that lawmakers will not approve every change proposed. Be prepared to negotiate for what's most important. "It takes a lot of political give and take," notes Vince Graham, a developer of the I'On community in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.
- May result in temporary changes. Proposing temporary changes to codes can prove to legislators that they work and will be accepted by the community. Once this is proven, they can become permanent changes.

Costs

Investing in real estate projects is always risky, so it may be challenging to find the right lender. A few ways to entice lenders are to

- Convince stakeholders of the importance of the work, as well as its expected profit.
- Provide financial incentives for smart growth projects. These incentives can include tax credits to developers, state funding to local governments, or reduced development application fees.
- Set up state funds dedicated to smart growth. Wisconsin has a grant program specifically for communities developing comprehensive plans. The coastal program also has its own smart growth funding.

Community Opposition

Some resistance to new development from citizens is to be expected. But there are several ways to encourage their support.

- Involve citizens from the beginning. If the community sets the criteria for development, its approval should be easier to get for future projects.
- Use local government. When Vince Graham and his team were developing I'On, they tried to convince city leaders and the community at the same time. But when he helped develop another similar community in South Carolina, the local government had already "sold" the idea to citizens, so the project moved along much more easily.
- Use examples from other communities. Many areas have experienced job increases, environmental improvements, and financial growth as a result of smart growth practices. Use these kinds of examples to demonstrate the benefits of your project to residents.

For more help in overcoming obstacles to smart growth, such as those described above, see the resources listed below and on Page 3.

STATE SMART GROWTH PROJECTS

To better understand the smart growth activities occurring at the state level, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center compiled an inventory of current smart growth projects, as well as those completed since 2000. This clearinghouse of information can be found on-line at www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/sgclearinghouse/.

The list contains information on over 200 projects completed by such organizations as state coastal zone management programs, Sea Grant offices, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Programs.

For more information about the clearinghouse, contact the Center at smart.growth@noaa.gov.

WHO'S INVOLVED IN SMART GROWTH?

Everyone! All members of a community can and should participate in its development at some level. Here are just a few examples of the kind of involvement different community groups can have.

Developers – Create the site design and fulfill local environmental permitting requirements.

City and County Planners – Keep development within comprehensive plans and vision.

Transportation Agencies – Direct the development of sustainable infrastructure for future generations.

Conservation and Environmental Groups – Ensure the area's ecosystem and natural resources are protected throughout planning and development for future generations.

Historic Preservationists – Lead elements of a project that preserve past architectural and cultural traditions.

Senior Citizen Organizations – Inform developers of the cultural heritage or significance of an area and represent elderly residents who rely on pedestrian-friendly communities.

Local Businesses – Engage themselves in a smart growth community to benefit from increased pedestrian activity or location of residential units above storefronts.

School Boards – Represent the needs of school children, their parents, and school employees. New development can affect school residency zones and student diversity, so school boards need to be involved in development planning.

Realtors, Home Buyers – Have more options for buying new homes. Resource-efficient mortgages factor the cost savings of living closer to public transportation and having an energy-efficient home into a mortgage rate.

Firefighters and Police Officers – Help plan street and building codes to ensure they can access all areas.

SMART GROWTH RESOURCES

There's a multitude of Web sites, guidebooks, articles, and other resources dedicated to smart planning and development. Here are some that can help if your agency plans to become more involved in smart growth.

Smart Growth in General

- Smart Growth Network. www.smartgrowth.org
- Environmental Protection Agency's smart growth Web site. www.epa.gov/livability/
- Local Government Commission's land use publications.
www.lgc.org/bookstore/land_use/publications/
- American Planning Association. www.planning.org

Federal Reports on Sprawl

- *Coastal Sprawl: The Effects of Urban Design on Aquatic Ecosystems in the United States*. Pew Oceans Commission report. www.pewoceans.org/oceanfacts/
- *Part IV: Living on the Edge: Economic Growth and Conservation along the Coast*. Preliminary report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.
<http://oceancommission.gov>

Regulations and Codes

- Environmental Protection Agency's Model Ordinances to Protect Local Resources.
www.epa.gov/owow/nps/ordinance/
- *Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation*, volumes I and II.
www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/getting_to_sg2.htm

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT: EXPLORING THE ALTERNATIVES

With so many different factors to consider, it's difficult to decide on just one way to plan for smart growth. To help states wade through the multitude of options, the NOAA Coastal Services Center has developed a Web site that presents three alternative design scenarios for a site in coastal Georgia—and that considers some of the environmental, economic, and social implications of each.

Alternatives for Coastal Development: One Site, Three Scenarios, located at www.csc.noaa.gov/alternatives/, can help those interested in smart development explore different ways to approach it. The site includes

- Maps and details of the three different designs: conventional, conservation, and new urbanist
- Comparisons of environmental, economic, and social indicators
- 3-D views of each scenario
- Detailed project methodology
- Background information and useful tools to support decisions on growth and development

Coastal resource managers anywhere in the country can use this site to learn more about similar development alternatives. For more information about the site or the scenarios, contact Amanda Rutherford at Amanda.Rutherford@noaa.gov or Nancy Cofer-Shabica at Nancy.Cofer-Shabica@noaa.gov.

Coastal Connections is a publication of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center, produced for the coastal resource management community. Each issue of this free bimonthly newsletter focuses on a tool, information resource, or methodology of interest to the nation's coastal resource managers.

Please send us your questions and suggestions for future editions. To subscribe or contribute to the newsletter, contact our editors at

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NEWS AND NOTES



NOAA Launches Coastal Brownfields Web Site

NOAA's new coastal brownfields Web site explains the agency's involvement in coastal brownfields and provides details on NOAA's current brownfields activities. Visit the site at www.brownfields.noaa.gov. For information on the upcoming National Brownfields Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, go to www.brownfields2004.org.

CSO Seeking Comments on States' Needs Report

The Coastal States Organization is seeking input from state coastal managers on its report on the information and research needs of coastal managers for coastal observations and monitoring. To read the report, go to www.uhi.umb.edu/pdf_files/draft_observation_report_0528.pdf. To comment, contact jcarter@sso.org.

New Report Examines State MPA Programs

A new report on state-level marine protected area (MPA) policies and programs in the U.S. examines the potential implications on states of a national MPA system and presents recommendations for building one. Read the report at www2.mpa.gov/mpa/mpaservices/virtual_library/publications.lasso.

Upcoming Conferences

For information on upcoming conferences such as the National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration, the Coastal States Organization's annual conference, or the International Conference on Shellfish Restoration, visit the NOAA Coastal Services Center's upcoming events Web site at www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html.

Transitions

Victor Somme is the new director of the U.S. Virgin Islands coastal program. Bill Rohring is the assistant director.

Accolades

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary is celebrating its 15th anniversary... A video on seagrasses produced by the Florida Coastal Management Program and its partners recently won several awards, including the international Telly Award and Videographer Award, for excellence in an educational video.

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